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Thesis

Social Consciousness in George Eliot's Novels.

Submitted by

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Wm. George, pseud. - Criticism

1892-1893

Social Consciousness in George Eliot's Novels.

Books used.

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| "Scenes of Clerical Life" 1857 | } | Home Library Edition |
| "Amos Barton" | | A. L. Burt Co., N. Y. |
| "Adam Bede" 1858 | } | Early Works |
| "The Mill on the Floss" 1860 | | |
| "Silas Marner" 1861 | } | Later Works |
| "Romola" 1862 | | |
| "Felix Holt" 1863 | | |
| "Middlemarch" 1869 | | |
| "Daniel Deronda" 1876 | | |
| "Life of George Eliot" by Leslie Stephen | | |
| published by MacMillan | | |
| "Social Ideals in English Letters" by Vida D. Scudder | | |
| published by Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. | | |

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Social Consciousness in George Eliot's Novels.

A. Introduction.

1. Present opportuneness of question.
2. Difficulties in fair handling of it.
 - a. Extreme radical.
 - b. Extreme conservative.
3. Universality of question.
4. Need of mean between

{	past	}	{	classicism	}
	and			and	
{	present	}	{	romanticism	}

 for solution of some problems involved.

B. George Eliot's fitness for the consideration of social consciousness.

1. Her nature.

- a. Her sympathy with people.
- b. Her philosophic appreciation of such forces as heredity and environment.
- c. Her humor.

2. Her childhood.

3. Influences of father, Methodist aunt, and teachers.

4. Calvinism and liberalism.

5. Readings and discussions.

6. The Boys.

7. George Henry Lewes' influence.

8. The novels.

a. Her sensitiveness.

b. Her thoroughness.

C. Early works compared with later.

D. Body of paper.

1. Her idea of happiness--service and struggle.
2. Slowness of evolution and character development.
 - a. Stationary characters {
 - (unimportant characters,
 - characters seen for short
 - time,
 - emphasized virtues or vices
 - (as in Morality Plays.
 - b. Developing characters, influenced and changed by what happens; true to life, neither villains nor saints.
3. Power of individual despite birth and surroundings.
4. Personal desire subordinate to fellowship conception.
 - a. Modern socialism.
 - b. Felix Holt.
 - c. The practicalness of ideals.
5. Incentives.
 - a. Money
 - b. Selfish ambition
 - c. Work well done.)
 - d. Altruism

} stronger than a & b.
6. Human nature not essentially selfish.
 - a. The inevitableness of a social order recognizing sharing.
 - 1st step to this--tackling expedient, concrete reform at hand.
 - b. Present day tendencies proving "get-together-ness"
 - c. George Eliot's fundamental beliefs in the same.
 1. Closeness of common lot of rich and poor.
 2. Closeness of common lot of friend and foe.

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7. Redemptive power of fellowship and loneliness of the selfish man.

8. Need of struggle and renunciation in passing from selfishness to the human nature call of brotherhood.

a. Illustrations.

b. Hardness of easy consolation. ("D. D.")

c. Old vs. young.

d. Human fellowship the result of struggle.

e. The sacredness of rebellion ("Romola"--I. W. W.)

(f. George Eliot's ministers) Digression.

g. Outline of themes and struggles in novels as wholes.

h. Value of confession.

9. Religion and mysticism

a. Their connection with social consciousness.

b. Eliot's belief in mysticism.

c. Her sympathy with religious sincerity to which she could not agree.

d. Her religion--fellowship⁺ and mysticism⁺ and beauty in art.

e. Dolly Winthrop's philosophy.

10. Art.

11. Women.

12. Redemption through

a. Work

b. Human relations

c. The child

d. Wide interests

e. Sorrow

13. Irredeemable things.

14. Conclusion.

Social Consciousness in George Eliot's Works.

The solution of the great industrial questions of today that bring our religious and philosophic notions hard up against the economic situation, demands a calm and yet an energetic point of view. What is fair to our fellow men, the altered position of women, the recognized forces of heredity and environment have to be sanely considered. The radical shouts for new remedies needed for unprecedented conditions. He may be the I. W. W. extremist or the over optimistic believer in human nature. Mr. Conservative replies, "Times are not so new, history repeats itself, consider the fall of Rome, ponder a bit on the French Revolution. Violence and excess bring disaster. Go slow around the curves!"

Both may be right but they see the different sides of the shield. To be sure, social democracy, longing for fair play of individual freedom and for one's fellows is not new. It runs back to the beginning of community life--its principles are old, but every time a man feels and is converted to these principles he has a virile, progressive force that is going to drive him on, beyond mere historic contemplation. It is the old struggle of classicism versus romanticism, only the struggle does not make

us go round in circles, but forward in spiral evolution\$. We may find somewhat similar problems in the past but our own troubles are unique enough to demand a new born solution.

Because these social troubles of 1914 are connected extrinsically with today but intrinsically with that philosophy which is universal for all times and countries, and with human nature, a safe student to observe may be George Eliot, who can say--

'Adam
Bedes
p.187

"I have come to the conclusion that human nature is lovable. The way I have learnt something of its deep pathos, its sublime mysteries--has been by living a great deal among people more or less commonplace and vulgar, of whom you would perhaps hear nothing surprising if you were to inquire about them in the neighborhood where they dwelt."

The fast flying dust of the foremost runners Bernard Shaw and Arnold Bennet, does not obscure George Eliot, nor does the dim perspective of the distant past fade her from view. She is animated by the central principles of socialism and the progressive party, when she speaks through Dorothea

2
Midd.
p.199.

Brooke,--²"I should like to make life beautiful--I mean everybody's life.-----It spoils my enjoyment of anything when I am made to think that most people are shut out of it."

She feels the democracy craving birth in her times, she recognizes the inner struggle of the individual

toward right expression and the pressing forward of the class, she know full well the grips of heredity and one's lot in life and most important of all, with a humor sympathetic and genuine, she reveals ourselves, the common people, our weaknesses, nobilities, and our interdependence in this interwoven life of ours.

She was well fitted by nature and training to play this part in literature or portraying of life. Thirteen years before the Reform Bill of 1832 Marian Evans was born at Arbury Farm of a father, strong in character, and a superior mother, Christiana Pearson, his second wife. In 1820 the family moved to Griff so her childhood in Warwickshire was among those genuine country folk who are so often described as prototypes of her earlier characters. Sir Roger Newdigate, by whom her father was employed, was a fine old Oxford Tory. Her intense child joys and imaginings we know when we read of Maggie Tulliver watching the diamond jets of water from the mill wheel or driving nails in her wooden Fetish under the high pitched roof of the great garret. The worth of the middle class, her carpenter father gave her. Whether or not Mr. Tulliver, Adam Bede and Caleb Garth are drawn from his sterling qualities, they reflect her great sympathy and love for men like him. Later in Coventry, when she consented

to church attendance just for his sake after reason had convinced her of the pure selfishness of Calvinism in Christianity, we feel her own mental struggles were enabling her to conceive those of Romola perhaps, or Maggie harassed by Tom. When her father died in 1849 George Eliot went to the continent for a while, where her mind was torn between past and present. This masculine vigor of intellect coupled with feminine sensibility to details and humor, made her more than a student of philosophy; she lived through the evolution of it at first hand. We think not so much of scenery as the background of her novels, as of humanity itself. From 1830-1870 religious interests were keen in England. George Eliot's loved aunt, Mrs. Samuel Evans, brought to her the truths of Methodism. So genuine and tender a belief in conversion and the healing power of Christ did this good woman unfold that later George Eliot could draw the compelling beauty of Dinah Morris after Methodism had passed into objective beauty to her. Mrs. Evans, too, gave this niece the suggestion for Hetty Sorrel's story from a real happening of child murder which she chanced to relate.

George Eliot's early schooldays had already brought the lasting influence of books and some dear friendships. During the three years at Attleboro she grew fond of re-reading certain passages. Perhaps her poor health and night terrors made her more thoughtful than some children,

although she was never precocious. At the boarding school in Nuneaton she formed an intimacy with Miss Lewis, a head teacher. For many years they discussed the books they liked best. At Coventry she attended the school of the Misses Franklin, Baptists, whose father is thought to have been in her mind when she drew Mr. Lyon. There some of her themes were considered especially worthy and she was said to excel in language and music although she was remembered as very shy. But her shyness and sensitiveness were not always a drawback. They may have quickened her perceptions and later under Mr. Lewes made for concentration.

When she was sixteen her mother died and she left school to keep house for her father. Her reading now became large and miscellaneous, while her diffidence gave chance for reflection. Although her brother Isaac was a high churchman, her father was a Calvinist and she became interested in the Evangelical Church which was then the most socially active. This was likely due to the Methodist aunt, Mrs. Samuel Evans. From now on the relation of art to morality crept into her consideration of religion. In turn she was interested in Wordsworth, Young's "Night Thoughts," Hannah More, Wilberforce, the Oxford Movement, John Harris, the great teacher of liberal tendencies. In her friendship with the Brays she found comrades in forward movements and

had a chance to express and discuss those thoughts that had been burning in her mind. The Brays were disciples of Robert Owen, the Socialist, and knew of Chartism, which makes us feel how very tolerant they would all have been of our own Socialist movement. Through them she met Owen, Harriet Martineau, Emerson. She soon translated Strauss's Life of Christ, almost her first public work, and became a student of the German philosophers, of Spinoza in particular. Rousseau and George Sand impressed her. She became assistant editor of the "Westminster Review" and now exchanged opinions with John Stuart Mill, Newman, Spencer, Carlyle, Froude, and Theodore Parker. In 1851 she was introduced by Herbert Spencer to George Henry Lewes, the slight, ugly, Bohemian, but brilliant grandson of a second rate actor. George Eliot was now doing a man's work on the "Review," breaking down her health over articles on politics and taxation. At length the happy alliance between these two unusual people was formed and in time under his suggestion, nurtured by his kindly criticism, the novels were given birth. In them we shall find her thoughts on social questions best recorded.

She spared neither time nor study in preparing for her later novels, - "Romola," "Felix Holt," "Middlemarch," and "Daniel Deronda". Exact details of places, politics, laws and costumes are accurate, and poor Sir Walter Scott and Will Shakspeare could find hardly

an anachronism for sympathy. The early novels, - "Scenes from Clerical Life," "Adam Bede," "The Mill on the Floss," and "Silas Marner", are more enjoyable to most readers because they are more spontaneous. She wrote these in a spirit of delight out of that greatest preparation for any work, the large background of her own experience. As her characters mirror her deepest convictions of life principles we shall disregard whether the speaker be one of her creations or the author herself. It is the principles we shall care about, not even so far as they are George Eliot's but so far as they contain truth.

In what does happiness consist for those whose conditions are below the living wage\$, is a vital, social question asked today by those who are beginning to see that happiness lies beyond possession of this world's goods. To be sure we must have the living wage of material things to be normal in any respect but Silas Marner with his bags of gold and Mr. Casaubon with his model tenantry at Lowick, had not the key to happiness. George Elliot finds it in seeing beyond one's self, in service, leading to fellowship. Romola interprets it in that¹"revulsion from self satisfied ease" and²"new fellowship with suffering that had already been awakened in her."

Savonarola tells her, -"Live for Florence-for your own people." Even when her faith in Fra Girolamo has left her she wins happiness in the plague stricken island, and at last in her service to Tessa and her children. When belief in man and God is shattered, Silas Marner finds joy in doing for another. After wanting the chance of happiness so keenly, Dorothea Brooke wins it in serving Lydgate and Rosamund. Maggie Tulliver almost gains it and her struggling failure makes the beauty of service brighter than ever, makes her success. Gwendolen Grandcourt at last sees its vision, and Daniel Deronda, always serving, has glorified happiness with the definite conception of future service to his race. Milly Barton's serenity is bathed in service. Felix Holt is in an outrage of happiness from the beginning of the story for service is always before him.

It is to be considered in the mad rush of to-day that even such good things as happiness and service do not come to our willing spirits like cloud-bursts. Of slow growth are capacities, not of the get-rich-quick order. Herein George Eliot excels in realism. Her people are never virtues and vices personified like those in the old Morality Plays. Even the colossal monster Bulstrode feels the loss of his ideal more than that of his

money. George Eliot teaches more effectively because her people are neither angels nor villains, but the flesh and blood variety that change and develop slowly under forces brought to bear on them. Tito at the close, strangled and haunted by fear, is not the same as the earlier Tito, who has not yet uttered falsehood.

1 Midd.
649

1 "Character is not cut in marble--it is not something solid and unalterable. It is something living and changing, and may become diseased as our bodies do."

2 Rom.
222

2 "That inexorable law of human souls, we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by the reiterated choice of good, or evil that gradually decides our character."

Slow must character changes be, for the present, which surrounds the individual, links with his past as much as with his future. The conventions were of moderate growth in the Dodson family, those conventions regarding linen, new bonnets, funerals and physic. Correspondingly moderate would the breaking down of such ideals have to be. Mrs. Glegg might condone Maggie's falling, but in her most generous moments the immorality of it would remain. The future of Tom is the logical out-growth of the antecedent material concerning him. Heredity started him a latent Dodson,--as such he develops. And Maggie--well, Maggie is herself, as her father says,--

- 1 M. on Fl. 12. "That's the worst on't wi' the crossing o' breeds, you can never justly calkilate what'll come on't." Tito with his weaknesses was a beggar-boy. Mary Garth with her strength and crisp, sarcastic charm was the true daughter of the noble Caleb and his well informed wife. Esther Lyon, with her mother's heritage, responded more readily to the French training than to that of Malthouse Yard. The laws of heredity are truthfully expounded. Cross breeding is a new discovery of eugenics yet George Eliot recognized its efficiency in Will Ladislav, who "makes good" in spite of his bad Polish Blood and the sneers of those who themselves were "o² a breed very much in need of crossing." In "Daniel Deronda" "Herr³ Klesmer has cosmopolitan ideas. He looks forward to a fusion of the races."
- 2 Midd. 535
- 3 D. D. 242

This, however, is one of the dangers of today, to lay the blame too much on heredity and environment. Our author does not leave it there, those bonds may be broken.

- 4 Midd. 535
- 4 "It ought to lie with a man's self that he is a gentleman," says Ladislav and he proves it.
- 5 Rom. 544
- 5 "Justice is like the kingdom of God--it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning."

George Eliot wrote at a time when Darwin's theories were influencing thinking people. Our own period emphasizes life and democracy as much as life

and evolution. Here George Eliot is an unconscious forerunner of our day. Personal desire, she teaches, should give way to the greater need of one's race and fellows. The central themes of "Romola," "Felix Holt," "Middlemarch," and "Daniel Deronda" deal with yielding of self to those great principles of expanding life.

1 D. D.
364

¹"Democratic in his feeling for the multitude, Deronda suspected himself of loving too well the losing causes of the world," and longed to be

2 D. D.
365

²"an organic part of social life, instead of roaming in it like a yearning disembodied spirit, stirred with a vague social passion, but without fixed local habitation, to render fellowship real." Toward the

3 D. D.
753

end he says, ³"I come of a strain that has ardently maintained the fellowship of our race." Sweet,

4 Midd.
290

bewildered Dorothea Brooke, moved by emotion, says as she watches the funeral of old Featherstone, ⁴"It seems to me we know nothing of our neighbors unless they are cottagers. One is constantly wondering what sort of lives other people lead, and how they take things." After she has known life quite fully

5 Midd.
714

she can yet feel, ⁵"If we had lost our own chief good, other people's good would remain, and that is worth trying for. Some can be happy." Lydgate, in his more intellectual way, feels the quickening love of democracy in his desire for the hospital. It is too big and persistent a longing to be kindled by

mere science.

1 F. Holt. ¹
64 Felix Holt says, "This world is not a very fine place for a good many people in it. But I've made up my mind it shan't be the worse for me if I can help it. They may tell me I can't alter the world--that there must be a certain number of sneaks and robbers in it, and if I don't lie and filch somebody else will. Well, then, somebody else shall, for I won't." Felix had a civic conscience. I am sure he would like to speak on Socialism at Boston Common without a regular license. He would like to be rearrested for that cause. Could the propaganda of Socialism be more clearly stated than by him in what he

2 F. Holt ²
292 acknowledges his central motive?--"The question in the world is, how to give every man a man's share in

3 F. Holt ³
184 life," or "I'm a Radical myself and mean to work all my life long against privilege, monopoly, and oppression." An extremely modern position does George Eliot take when the path of true love is crossed by discussion on democracy, but even Esther

4 F. Holt ⁴
127 listens when the young man explodes, "You are discontented with the world because you can't get just the small things that suit your pleasure, not because it's a world where myriads of men and women are ground by wrong and misery and tainted with pollution."

5 Midd. ⁵
341 Equal opportunity to all for fairness and for chance of individual development is democracy. "It will not do to keep one's own pigs clean," says the

expedient Mrs. Cadwallader. So the Socialist says and yet he is accused of no eye to practical business.

1 F. Holt
136

Fortunately he has ideals and¹ "what we call illusions are often a wider vision of past and present realities." If any virtue be in his illusions,

2 F. Holt
208

² "there's a right in things. The heavy end will get down most." What the socialist movement needs is more fair publicity and trying out. It recognizes

3 F. Holt
295

that³ "ignorant power comes in the end to the same thing as wicked power. It makes misery." It does not expect to win at the next election. It knows that the period of defeat for candidates is the time for maturing strength. It knows ~~the~~ working man is

4 F. Holt
146

susceptible and at voting time may not⁴ "know which end he stands on if it wasn't for the tickets and treating." As Ladislav said to his defeated liberal

5 Midd.
407

candidate so the Socialist may urge,⁵ "What we have to work at now is the "Pioneer" and political meetings." But the opponent may say, as fast as men gain knowledge of the movement and subsequent power, will not their ambition bring selfishness, will not their press be controlled by a few, will not they exploit their comrades as they were once exploited? Can the golden rule be ever more than sweet theory?

6 F. Holt
36

Felix Holt admits,⁶ "That's how the working men are left to foolish devices and keep worsening themselves:

the best heads among them forsake their comrades, and go in for a house with a high door step and a brass knocker," and¹ men are not ashamed to make public questions which concern the welfare of millions a mere screen for their own petty, private ends."

The men within the circle know these dangers. The crux of the question is--can human nature endure the temptation to selfish ambitions? Are money and self the only spurs to the exercising of our highest abilities? Are men to be lazy unless the sword of competition or poverty hangs over their heads? What does George Eliot reply? The motive of Caleb Garth

² A. Bede
11 was work well done. Adam Bede says, "I cant abide to see men throw away their tools the minute the clock begins to strike as if they took no pleasure in their work, and was afraid o' doing a stroke too much. The very grindstone will go on turning a bit after you loose it."

Nor was it worldly gain Mr. Tulliver had in mind when, recovering consciousness from his stroke

³ M. on F.
207 he remembered, "I've lent Moss money but I shall never think of distressing him to pay it."

⁴ M. on F.
211 "And mind--there's 50 pounds o' Luke's as I put into the business--he gave it me a bit at a time, and he's got nothing to show for it. You must pay him the first thing." Even Bob Jakin's broad thumb could make a splendid gift just as

his generous heart could open with real sympathy.

Amos Barton was not so dull that he did not feel the greater dullness of the poor house audience. Not for reward did he preach there. Nor are these the exceptions, George Eliot deals with common folk,

¹ A. Barton with ¹ "the poetry and pathos, tragedy and comedy lying
472

in the experience of a human soul that looks out through ordinary, dull gray eyes." Her heroes and heroines are our neighbors. As she says, ² "I wish to stir your sympathy with common-place troubles--to win your tears for real sorrow, sorrow such as may live next door to you--such as walks neither in rags nor in velvet, but in very ordinary decent apparel."

True, Felix Holt was ambitious, but he wanted to be

³ "a demagogue of a new sort, an honest one, if possible, who will tell the people," he says, "they are blind and foolish, and neither flatter them nor fatten on them, I have my heritage--an order I belong to. I have the blood of a line of handicrafts men in my veins, and I want to stand up for the lot of the handicrafts-
man as a good lot, in which a man may be better

trained to all the best functions of his nature than if he belongs to the grimacing set who have visiting cards, and are proud to be thought richer than their neighbors." ⁴ "I don't expect to go to heaven for it,

but I wed it because it enables me to do what I most

² A. Barton
59

³ F. Holt
265

⁴ F. Holt
265

1
 1. Holt want to do on earth." Felix was "of a fibre that
 109 vibrated too strongly to the life around him to
 shut himself away in quiet even from suffering and
 irremediable wrong."

Is human nature too selfish to conceive of
 sharing? Even the man below the bread line can
 embrace democracy. When Romola passes the pale
 faces of the hungry men on her way to carry bread
 to the sick women and children, the leader of the
 hungry crowd refuses her crust and stands guard over
 the weaker Baldassarre. Is human nature not tested
 here?

2
 Socialism may come under some other name but
 its principles must prevail. "How will this
 millennium of equal opportunity and deified human
 nature be won?" the Socialist is deridingly asked.
 2
 Be patient with him. Remember it is "very great
 and noble, the power of respecting a feeling which
 one does not share." But, says the critic, the
 members of his cooperative commonwealth must be as
 large souled to bring to pass Utopia as Utopia might
 make them, could it ever come. Present economic
 conditions run by such large souled creatures would
 not admit bribery, child labor, and white slavery.
 The reformed is always "up in the air" like Dorothea
 3
 Brooke who had "thought she could be patient with

John Milton as husband but she had never imagined him behaving in this way" (like Mr. Casaubon.) The Socialist knows these pitfalls. He is an enthusiast, which name George Eliot would keep for ¹"the highest order of mind." The Socialist knows too that no man can be large souled or even normal with too long hours, in too bad air, at too monotonous a loom, with too ill nourished a body, and too little hope of paying the debts that hang over him. He knows society rots as badly at the other, the Penleigh Grandcourt, end, and he is willing, keeping his ideals and illusions (?) ever before him, to lay hand on the task that offers. He will be expedient enough to tackle the near concrete reform just as he sometimes has to attack the individual mill-owner for the wrongs of a system. ²"The sincere antipathy of a dog toward cats in general necessarily takes the form of indignant barking at the neighbor's black cat, which makes daily trespass, the bark at imagined cats is yet comparatively feeble." The tangible step toward the ideal is the slogan of the English Fabian Socialist society. Again Felix Holt would agree in ³"The question now is, not whether we can do away with all the nuisances in the world but with a particular nuisance under our nose."

1
D. D.
572

2
F. Holt
170

3
F. Holt
135

1
D. D.
122
Socialists are not alone in wanting to do some-
thing. Other political parties feel we are ¹in a
time when universal kinship is declaring itself
fiercely." Cooper Institute, Ford Hall, and Saga-
more Conference show this trend, in our own vicinity,
which is working out in pure food laws, minimum wage
bills, and old age pensions.

2
A. Bede
9
The upper and lower classes used to get together
in worship only but as Adam Bede said, ²"We must have
something beside Gospel i' this world. Look at the
canals, and the aqueduc's, and the coal pit engines."
When the means of support and the material conditions
touching health are discussed and handled democratically
the upper class will find itself best benefited. It
can never get away from its utter dependence on those
below. Tuberculosis in the slums spreads its germs
to Fifth Avenue. ³"There is no private life which
has not been determined by a wider public life."
3
F. Holt
51
4
A. Bede
429
⁴"There is no sort of wrong deed of which a man can
bear the punishment alone, you can't isolate your-
self and say that the evil which is in you shall not
spread. Men's lives are as thoroughly blended with
each other as the air they breathe. Evil spreads as
necessarily as disease."

No one can be our deadly enemy, we may find his
life touches ours too closely to leave room for hate.
So was Harold Transome's life bound with Jermyn's and

and the most serious moment to Harold was when he realized why the independence of his aversion must go. ¹"For the first time the iron had entered into his soul and he felt the hard pressure of our common lot."

¹
F. Holt
461

Gwendolen Grandcourt in her struggle can not fight alone. She says to Deronda, ²"If you despair of me, I shall despair." But when she so far renounces her selfish independence to accept the help of another in a large way without demanding any personal touch, that is her supreme moment. She writes to Deronda on his marriage, ³"I only thought of myself, and I made you grieve.....You must not grieve any more for me. It is better--it shall be better with me because I have known you."

²
D. D.
568

³
D. D.
815

Through sharing comes the sublime capacity of Seth Bede to forget himself so far that his brother's happiness is his although it might have been his misery. ⁴"Have I felt thy trouble so little that I should not feel thy joy?" he can say when he learns Dinah's love for Adam.

⁴
A. Bede
510

Not only are we dependent on each other but this closeness of mankind is our salvation. George Eliot's strongest proof lies in the utter apathy and sadness of the lonely or selfish person. Silas Marner, purpose gone, grew strange and abnormal. His bulging eyes, his near vision, and his shyness seemed worse.

¹
Silas M. 84 Yet he had¹ "inevitably a sense that if any help came to him it must come from without." Can it be the

²
Silas M. 3177 the life of a lady are offered,² "I like the working folks and their victuals and their ways."³ "I could not give up the folks I've been used to." Silas

⁴
Silas M. 174 asks Godfrey,⁴ "How'll she feel just the same for me as she does now, when we eat o' the same bit, an'

⁵
Romola 575 drink o' the same cup?" It is the lesson Sir Launfal teaches, the lesson of sharing. Happiness comes not so much in depending on another as in allowing another to depend on us. Romola, herself taught by the deepest experiences of life, teaches Lillo,⁵ "We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good."

The most heart rending of all George Eliot's people is Mrs. Transome, alone even in sorrow, an eager minded woman who advanced in life without any activity of tenderness or any large sympathy. She had her¹ "ways which must not be crossed, and had learned to fill up the great void of life with giving

small orders to tenants and insisting on medicines for infirm cottagers." When even these habits are shattered and she is without human contact with husband, son, or early paramour, with no sympathy save from kind Denner, the picture is far more powerful than that of Hetty Sorrel or Tito consumed by selfishness. Death comes to them before youth is past, but with Mrs. Transome, is the more fearful retribution of isolate life. How in contrast does she stand amid the cold splendor of Transome Court with Esther Lyon, gone back to a life in Malthouse Yard, touched on every side by love of common people. But Esther had struggled to choose,¹ "She knew the dim life of the back street, the contact with sordid vulgarity, the lack of refinement for the senses, the summons to a daily task." Yet in the more selfish life of the manor she had seen herself² "in a silken bondage that arrested all motion, and was nothing better than a well cushioned despair. To be restless amidst ease, to be languid among all appliances for pleasure was a possibility that seemed to haunt the rooms of Transome Court."

¹
F. Holt
465

²
F. Holt
465

To reach the higher conception of happiness George Eliot's people always pass through struggle and renunciation as happens in real life. Romola³ says, "There are so many things wrong and difficult in the world that no man can be great--he can hardly

³
Rom.
576

keep himself from wickedness--unless he gives up thinking much about pleasures and rewards, and gets strength to endure what is hard and painful." When Felix Holt is in prison and realizes more than ever the greatness of his love for Esther, which he puts by as too selfish a happiness, he says,¹ "This thing can never come to me twice. It is my knighthood. That was always a business of great cost."

Struggling, renouncing, struggling, our dual selves within us, temperament against temperament, selfishness against community interest, the small against the large, making for development, we find all this in George Eliot's characters and plots as in real life. Gwendolen Harleth in the full vigor and cruelty of youth,² "with a certain fierceness of maidenhood in her," has had every influence to make her self centred; beauty, a proud spirit, an adoring mother, and a background of insignificant younger sisters. It is the perfection of selfishness when she says,³ "There is nothing I enjoy more than taking aim and hitting." ⁴"My plan is to do what pleases me." Her life touches Deronda's and her inner struggle begins. For a long time self is victorious. When Lydia Glasher writes her,⁵ "The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse," Gwendolen disregards it but all these supposed conquests of obstacles are to loom up as later horrors

¹
F. Holt
312

²
D. D.
69

³
D. D.
32
D. D.
68

⁵
D. D.
359

¹
D. D.
309
in her life. ¹"It was new to her that a question of right or wrong in her conduct should rouse her terror."

²
D. D.
310
"That lawlessness, that casting away of all care for justification suddenly frightened her," but Deronda's words are working like a refrain from the gaming

³
D. D.
336
table at Leubronn, ³--"There are enough inevitable turns of fortune which force us to see that our gain is another's loss:--that is one of the ugly aspects of life. We can't always help that our gain is

another's loss. Clearly because of that we should help it where we can." As Grandcourt's self grows small, hers grows large. Her mentor says, ⁴"Look on

⁴
D. D.
400
other lives besides your own. Try to care for what is best in thought and action--something that is good apart from your own lot." She feels, ⁵"I am

⁵
D. D.
456
almost getting fond of the old things now they are gone. When my blood is fired I can do daring things--take any leap, but that makes me frightened at my-

⁶
D. D.
457
self." ⁶"Turn your fear into your safeguard,"

Deronda counsels. The slow drawn out endurance with Grandcourt has decreased her trust in self. ⁷"Side

⁷
D. D.
677
by side with the dread of her husband had grown the self dread." After he is drowned, self accusation gushes forth but ⁸"her remorse was the precious sign

of a recoverable nature." The struggle is almost over and Gwendolen is still young. ⁹"It has come to

⁹
D. D.
775

you in your springtime. Think of it as a preparation," says Deronda, but such comfort and his revelation to her of his love for Mirah¹ "made him hate his own words; they seemed to have the hardness of easy consolation in them." In her letter to Deronda (see above) her triumph is supreme: self has been conquered to a larger, human end. We have had development through struggle and the modern theory that² "those who trust us educate us."

With Tito Melema, the slow victory of inner struggle reverses and is to self. At first he has merely³ "an unconquerable aversion to anything unpleasant." The softness of his nature required that⁴ "all sorrow should be hidden away from him." He sells the gems, the ring, Tessa is involved, not the greatest of his evils in effect, yet the very summit of his selfishness is that he prefers to be kind when nothing interferes. The library is sold and four times Baldassarre is disowned. Meanwhile⁵ "the pathway where desire leads becomes closed" to him and haunting fear has entered his soul.⁶ "Falsehood had prospered and waxed strong; but it had nourished the twin life, Fear." With father denied, Romola wronged and lost to consideration, it is easy to **compromise** Bernardo del Nero.⁷ "But a man's own safety is a God that sometimes makes very grim demands." The horror of his jump from Ponte Vecchio

¹
D. D.
812

²
D. D.
434

³
Rom.
110

⁴
Rom.
112

⁵
Rom.
138

⁶
Rom.
559

⁷
Rom.
492

and his strangling is foreshadowed by a last blaze of self glory when he rides triumphant into Florence. Tito, too, is young.

Baldassarre is old; his inner struggle is pitiful. The accumulated poison of revenge, utter loneliness, intermittant lapses of memory, the severe physical strain of prison fetters, hunger, and cold, change the loving father into the maniac craving justice. The intensity of his feeling finds response in the mystic fervor of Savonarola.

Roused by this same giant in mental strife, Romola's sleeping soul awakens to social consciousness. Her struggle waxes conversely as Tito's wanes, George Eliot is a skilful artist in contrast.

- 1 Rom. 56 Romola has that¹ "gift of gods to be born with contempt of all injustice and meanness." Forced to give up her father's sacred wishes, about to leave husband and Florence, she is stopped by Savonarola and turns
- 2 Rom. 55 back. His very face,² "strong featured, owed all its refinement to habits of the mind and rigid discipline of the body--in it human fellowship expressed itself
- 3 Rom. 209 as a strongly felt bond." With³ "that burning indignation at sight of wrong" he had⁴ "a power of swaying
- 4 Rom. 297 very various minds." Romola is brought⁵ "to subdue her
- 5 Rom. 246 nature to her husband's" as Savonarola insists,
- 6 Rom. 357 "Man can not choose his duties. You may choose to forsake your duties, and choose not to have the

sorrow they bring. What will you find? Sorrow without duty--bitter herbs and no bread with them."

¹
Rom. 383

Now Romola's life grows beautiful in ¹"fellowship with people sick, ragged, and narrow."² "Her

²
Rom. 384

woman's tenderness transforms itself into an enthusiasm of sympathy with general life."³ "No soul is desolate so long as there is a human being for whom it can feel trust and reverence. Romola's trust for Savonarola was like a rope, making her step elastic while she grasped it."

³
Rom. 385

⁴
Rom. 463

⁴"The inspiring consciousness breathed into her by his influence that her lot was vitally united with the general lot had exalted even the minor details of religion." So the hardest struggle for Romola is when she knows this great man can place his own ambition and safety above fairness, when he refuses to help her uncle. He too is suffering in a terrible

⁵
Rom. 486

⁵agony, "the struggle of a mind possessed by a never silent hunger after purity and simplicity, yet caught in a tangle of egoistic demands." Romola's faith

⁶
Rom. 486

falters, the church looses its hold. ⁶"The law was sacred but rebellion might be sacred. The soul

must dare to act on its own warrant." Let those who condemn unqualifiedly the I. W. W. and the militant movements today remember rebellion may be sacred.

Let them reread Giovannitti's poem The Cage with more sympathy. He too may be grasping the essential.

To Romola the essence of religion remains. She says,

¹
Rom.
488

¹ "God's kingdom is something wider--else, let me stand outside it with the beings I love." But she has gone through too much to bear lightly the shock of Savonarola's revelation. ² "No one who has ever known what it is to lose faith in a fellow man whom he has profoundly loved and revered will say that the shock can leave the faith in the Invisible Goodness unshaken."

²
Rom.
497

The inner struggles of Maggie Tulliver, Stephen Guest, Hetty Sorrel, Arthur Donnithorne, Codfrey Cass, Dorothea Brooke, Mr. Bulstrode, Fred Vincy, Rosamund, and Mr. Farebrother might all be traced similarly. Each growth or degradation of conscience is influenced by outward opposing and augmenting forces and people. George Eliot's plots are strongly knit just because she develops her main threads through the twistings of two struggling elements about some theme touching in every case social consciousness.

³
Midd.
454

Mr. Farebrother is one of her quiet but most impressive people. His well deserved promotion through Lydgate when the need for his mild gaming stakes is over and he can say, ⁵ "I shall do without whist now, Mother," only makes possible that splendid inner struggle to renounce his love of Mary Garth so unselfishly and follow Caleb's principle,--

1
Midd.
498

1 "The young ones have always a claim on the old to help them forward."

Mr. Farebrother suggests George Eliot's sympathetic treatment and interesting assortment of clergy, interesting particularly in one so liberal in her matured religious views. I have catalogued these men of cloth together with the columns suggesting the brief theme and struggle elements in the novels, adding also a hint of the humorous characters of which it is a pity the confines of our subject limit much comment.

<u>Novel</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Hero</u>	<u>Heroine</u>	<u>Doer of evil</u>
Scenes of Clerical Life Amos Barton 1857	The good and bad of gossip. Self forgetfulness and thinking well of others.	Amos Barton	Milly Barton	Caroline Czerlaski
Adam Bede 1858	Healing power of real religion. The nobility of work. Retribution of sin.	Adam Bede Seth Bede	Dinah Morris Hetty Sorrel	Arthur Donnithorne Hetty Sorrel
The Mill on the Floss. 1860	A struggle for righteousness even through failure is greater than no struggle. The blindness of prejudice and the beautiful morality of seemingly petty conventions.	Mr. Tulliver Philip Waken	Maggie Tulliver Lucy Deane	Stephen Guest Tom Tulliver
Silas Marner 1861	Fellowship and love of a child greater than riches in making happiness.	Silas Marner Aaron Winthrop	Eppie Nancy Lammeter	Godfrey Cass Dunsey Cass
Romola 1862	Selfishness vs. unselfishness. Redemptive power of fellowship. Beauty and power of mysticism.	Savonarola Bernardo del Nero	Romola Tessa	Tito Melema Dolfi Spini
Felix Holt 1863	Error will come to light and reap repentance. Education for fine and noble thoughts is needed to precede voting and liberal expression.	Felix Holt Harold Transome	Esther Lyon Mrs. Transome	Mr. Jermyon

(often philosophy)

Humorous Element Minister .

Village Gossips Mr. Barton
 Mr. Cleves

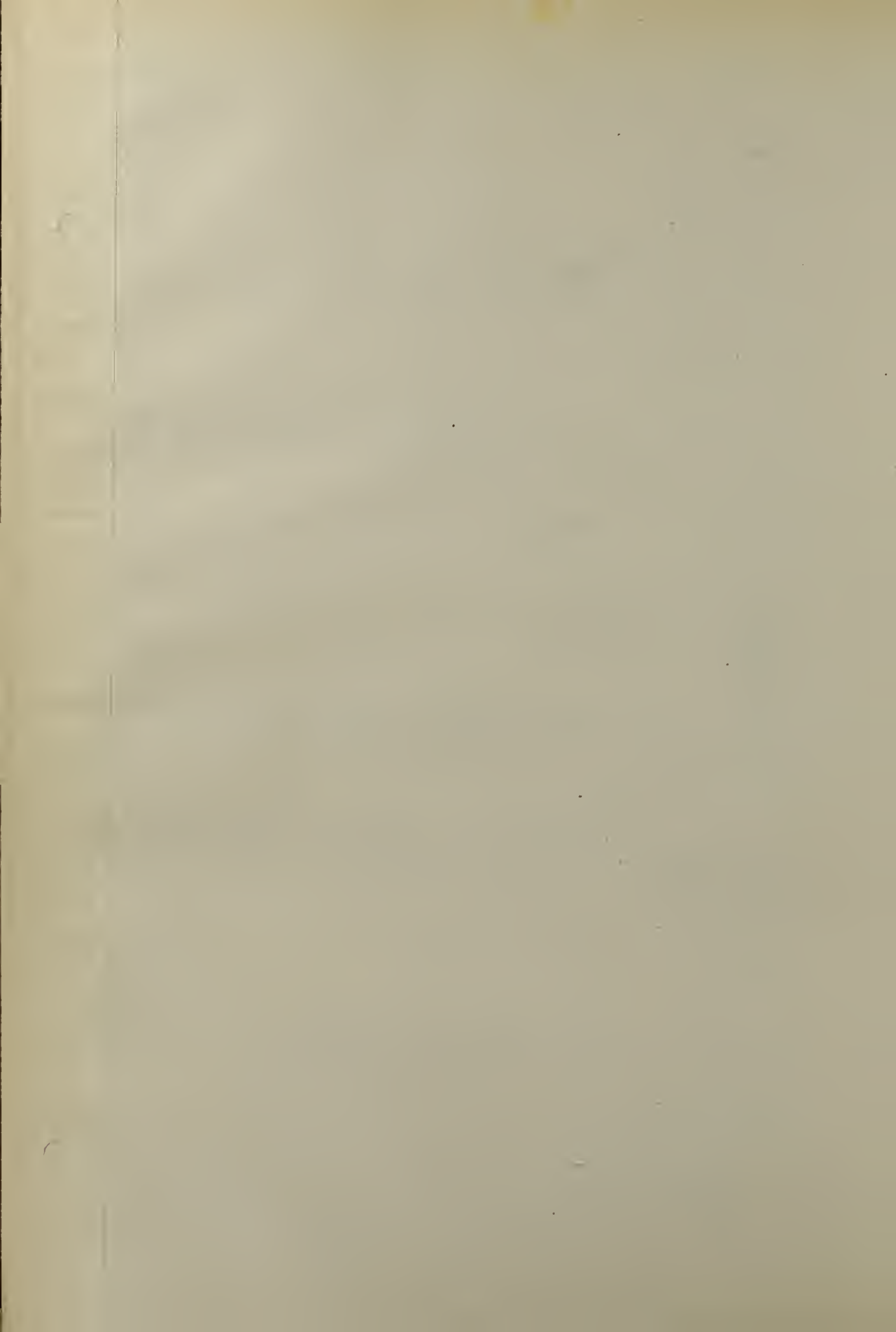
Mrs. Poyser Mr. Irvine
 Dinah Morris

Dodsons Dr. Kenn
Children Mr. Stelling
School Scenes
(millinery,
physic bottles)

Dolly Winthrop (Dolly Winthrop)
 element

Hello Savonarola
Monna Brigida Dino

Mrs. Holt Mr. Lyon
Lyddy Mr. Luigon
 The Rector



Novel	Theme	Hero	Heroine	Doer of
Middlemarch 1869	Redemptive power of work. Dis-integrating power of selfishness. Hollow shell of religious form. Compelling force of wide unselfish love	Will Ladislaw Mr. Casaubon Mr. Lydgate Fred Vincy Mr. Farebrother Caleb Garth	Dorothea Brooke Rosamund Vincy Mary Garth	Mr. Casa Mr. Feat st Mr. Raff Mr. Buls
Daniel Deronda 1876	Since our gain is another's loss, help where we can! Personal passions and desires should yield to the great principles carrying on the race which lead to expanding life.	Daniel Deronda Mordecai	Gwendolen Harleth Mirah Lapidoth	Henleigh Cr co Mr. Lush Lydia Glash

(often philosophy)

Humorous Element

Minister

Mrs. Cadwallader

Mr. Farebrother
Mr. Tyke

Mr. Gascoigne

It is interesting to notice the part of the confessional in these struggles. Tito confesses nothing to Romola, acknowledges no guilt to Baldassarre, lies more to cover lies. His fight goes against him. Rosamund Vincy Lydgate confesses, opens her heart to Dorothea; relief comes, as much as her small nature can receive. Godfrey Cass¹ realizes the need of confessing. ¹"While I've been putting off and putting off the trees have been growing. It's too late now." Yet his final desire for openness relieves his retribution. So Romola's relief is her outpouring to Savonarola, a mystic link between help from fellowman and from religion.

George Eliot with her analytical mind and rational tendencies in philosophy did not fail to consider the mystic as might be expected. Her appreciation of it seems even beyond that intense sympathy with which she regards such characters as Dinah and Savonarola, and her intense dependence on personalities connected with her own life like that of Lewes. There is something besides fellowship to her,² "those shadowy regions where human souls seek wisdom apart from the human sympathies which are the very life and substance of our wisdom." This is the something that hallows fellowship and social consciousness. Because of this she is ready to feel respect for beliefs to which she can not agree,

¹
Silas M.
179

Rom.
162

1
Rom.
156

to see into the soul of a Dino, and say with him,
¹"I felt there was a life of perfect love and purity
 of the soul in which there would be no uneasy hunger
 after pleasure, no tormenting questions, no fear of
 suffering." We can think of George Eliot as of
 Edward Everett Hale partaking of communion in both
 Catholic and Methodist churches.

2
D. D.
471

Mordecai is a type of mystic, yet his whole
 purpose is alive to the welfare of his race, their
spiritual welfare. He has that rare form of social
 consciousness belonging to the poet, which sees
 brotherhood in the large sweep of spiritual signifi-
 cance. Mysticism recognizes the ²"truth in thought,
 though it may never have been carried out in action."
 Dinah responds to this; she tells Hetty how, when
 quite alone, she sees and knows people in her inner
 vision plainer than ever when they are really with her.
 And then she feels their lot as her own and knows
 comfort in her Lord. George Eliot's surety of
 immortality is close to this mysticism. She is one
 of the most religious persons of her day and yet
 she is often remembered as an agnostic and breaker
 of conventions. To her, as to Romola, religion is
 bigger than a particular church or creed. When
 Dorothea Brooke and Ladislav talk of the fundamentals
 of life, George Eliot phrases in a remarkable way her
 own religion. Dorothea says, ³"By desiring what is

3
Mid.
349

perfectly good even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil--widening the skirt of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower.----I used to pray so much. Now I hardly ever pray. I try not to have desires merely for myself." Here is the exact doctrine of "The Servant in the House." Then Ladislav tells his faith,--

¹
Mid.
350

¹ "To love what is good and beautiful when I see it."

Fellowship + mysticism + beauty in art, these three make George Eliot's religion.

²
Rom.
376

Yet this mysticism did not in any way deny the practical religion of every day want. The preaching of Savonarola, that greatest of mystics,² "never insisted on gifts to the Invisible powers but only on help to visible need." Nor must we leave without a word from perhaps George Eliot's soundest preacher, Dolly Winthrop, on faith and practical works.³ "If anything looks hard to me, it's because there's things I don't know on, and for the matter o that, there may be plenty o things I don't know on for it's little as I know, that it is.....And all as we've got to do is to trusten, Master Marner,-- to do the right thing as fur as we know, and to trusten."

³
Silas M.
149

⁴
Silas M.
183

⁴ "It's the will of them above as a many things should be dark to us." Here is the unknown realm of mysticism inducing faith but counterpoised but

that known and solid realm of duty at hand and well

¹ Silas M. performed. ¹ "If we've done our part it isn't to be
⁸⁷ believed as Them as are above us ull be worse nor we
 are and come short o' Their'n." Nor is she mere
 philosopher with her splendid hints on washing and
 dressing Eppie, her pride in Aaron's elocution and
² S. Mar her toothsome lard cakes. Full well she knows ² "men's
⁸⁵ stomachs are made so comical they want a change."--
 Right in line is she with Socialists who insist on a
 cup of coffee to the listener before the harangue.
 Without the bread of life, without happiness it is
 harder to keep a hold on the faith, and perhaps it is
 most difficult of all as George Eliot knew so well
 herself, for those who have progressed beyond the
³ Silas M. simple village ways. ³ "Even people whose lives have
¹⁶ been made various by learning sometimes find it hard
 to keep a fast hold on their habitual views of life,
⁴ Silas M. on their Faith in the Invisible." ⁴ "The past becomes
¹⁶ dreamy because its symbols have all vanished" with
⁵ Rom. ⁵ outworn creeds and "the slippery threads of memory."
²⁷³ Then when belief in the old religion goes and all
 religion with it, the best substitute is to do some-
⁶ Silas M. thing. ⁶ "With reawakening sensibilities" from action
¹⁴⁶ ⁷ S. Mar. "memory has reawakened," and ⁷ "that sense of presid-
¹⁴⁶ ing goodness and the human trust which come from all
 pure peace and joy." Human trust has been akin to
 divine faith since before the days of Abou Ben Adhem,

and this brings us back to Dolly, Abou's true
disciple. She for all her simple village ways is
no surface speaker and has¹ "often a deal inside of
her as'll never come out." "If there's any good to
be got we've need of it i' this world," says she
and then practices what she preaches. T'is this
that gives her the halo.

Dolly is typical of those earlier characters
of George Eliot's who in their genuineness show her
the true artist. They seem in their unconsciousness
and lack of artificiality to carry their own lives
along, the hand of their author is not in evidence.
So do they "quicken our life into a higher conscious-
ness through the feelings" which Dowden says is
the function of art. It is only when the writer is
possessed by his creations that he rises to the
point of artist. So long as he subjugates them he
is not free from himself, but is the scientist and
analyzer. Plato, who decried poetry, music and the
arts, and would have in his republic only the useful
and directly didactic things of life, was himself
the unconscious poet, musician, and artist and his
own strongest refutation. So George Eliot in her
early books is artist of simple, humble people.
Such consummate knowledge of one's subject as this
kind of art needs, comes only with long familiarity
with one's material. The connoisseur must first

1
Dowden
Studies
in Lit.

know the science of shadows before he may deal with
their mysteries.¹ "Whatever modifies our intellectual
conceptions powerfully, in due time affects art power-
fully." So when George Eliot was about to undertake
themes like the Florence of Savonarola's day, the
question of Zionism and the Jewish race or the throb
of the English Reform Bill, she was great enough to
work first and painstakingly over historical facts
and raw material. Being the student she was the
greater artist. To assimilate the knowledge for
these later works was tremendous. So is it small
wonder that occasionally in "Romola" and "Deronda"
the scientist rather than the artist appears, that
philosophy in the abstract is preached which does
not so charm and hold the reader as the people of
the earlier books? George Eliot herself would be
the first to recognize this principle of art. She
loves what is good and beautiful wherever she sees
it and selects among people and things that which
has a keynote of truth and beauty. The strongest
feelings of her own life were never apart from the
concrete. Many a mind with her piercing philosoph-
ical power might have walled itself in by theories,
but she could never dwell apart from the touch of
humanity. Perhaps this explains why she could marry
again after that intimate life of sympathy with Lewes.

Poetry and art are akin to heaven, by being akin to the heavenly flashes of this world. Dorothea is at her highest moment of development when she realizes this and says to Ladislaw,¹ "I thought you cared only for poetry and art and the things that adorn life for us who are well off. But now I know you think of the rest of the world."² "You are much the happier of us two, Mr. Ladislaw, to have nothing."³ "I never felt it a misfortune to have nothing before," he said. "But poverty may be as bad as leprosy, if it divides us from what we most care for." It is the unseen things that are eternal, and this is the fullness of life where love and art join hands.

Herein may be the solution of the question of feminism of today. Will woman as an artist, as an individual with a career, trample on woman fulfilling her sex functions? Is life abundant enough for both? Deronja's mother would argue that it is not. Possessed by that feminine ambition not to endure failure and decline, she marries. To this point Bernard Shaw might be creating her. Then she finds after days of mere housewifely acting that pure art alone is still her magnet. Acting for the whole world calls her and

⁴ "no life was left" to love her son. She says after one of her days of pain and physical agony,⁵ "I am not a loving woman. That is the truth. It is a talent to love--I lacked it. Others have loved me--

¹
Midd.
480

²
Midd.
481
³
Midd.
482

⁴
D. D.
645
⁵
D. D.
670

and I have acted their love. I know very well what love makes of men and women--it is subjection. It takes another for a larger self." But is this true, this divergence of woman's purposes on earth? Will they never come together as do man's? Will woman not some day be a better mother because she is a citizen of the world? If this last be ever accepted through industrialism or any other influence as a duty of woman, as Deronda says,¹ "Let us bind love with duty; for duty is the love of law; and law is the nature of the eternal."

¹
D. D.
725

Real art then is something bigger than any one phase of life. George Eliot would agree with Millet, and today with Spargo in that power in life so commonly around us, unseen because so closely blended with the ordinary forces.² "Neither are picturesque lazzaroni or romantic criminals half so frequent as your common laborer, who gets his own bread and eats it vulgarly but creditably with his own pocket knife."

²
A. Bede
183

³
M. on Fl.
145

³ "Very common-place, even ugly, that furniture of our early home might look if it were put up to auction; an improved taste in upholstery scorns it,"--but it is the root bed of the loves and sanctities of our lives.⁴ "It is a sordid life, you say, this of the Tullivers and Dodsons, irradiated by no sublime principles, no romantic visions, no active self renouncing faith.--You could not live among such

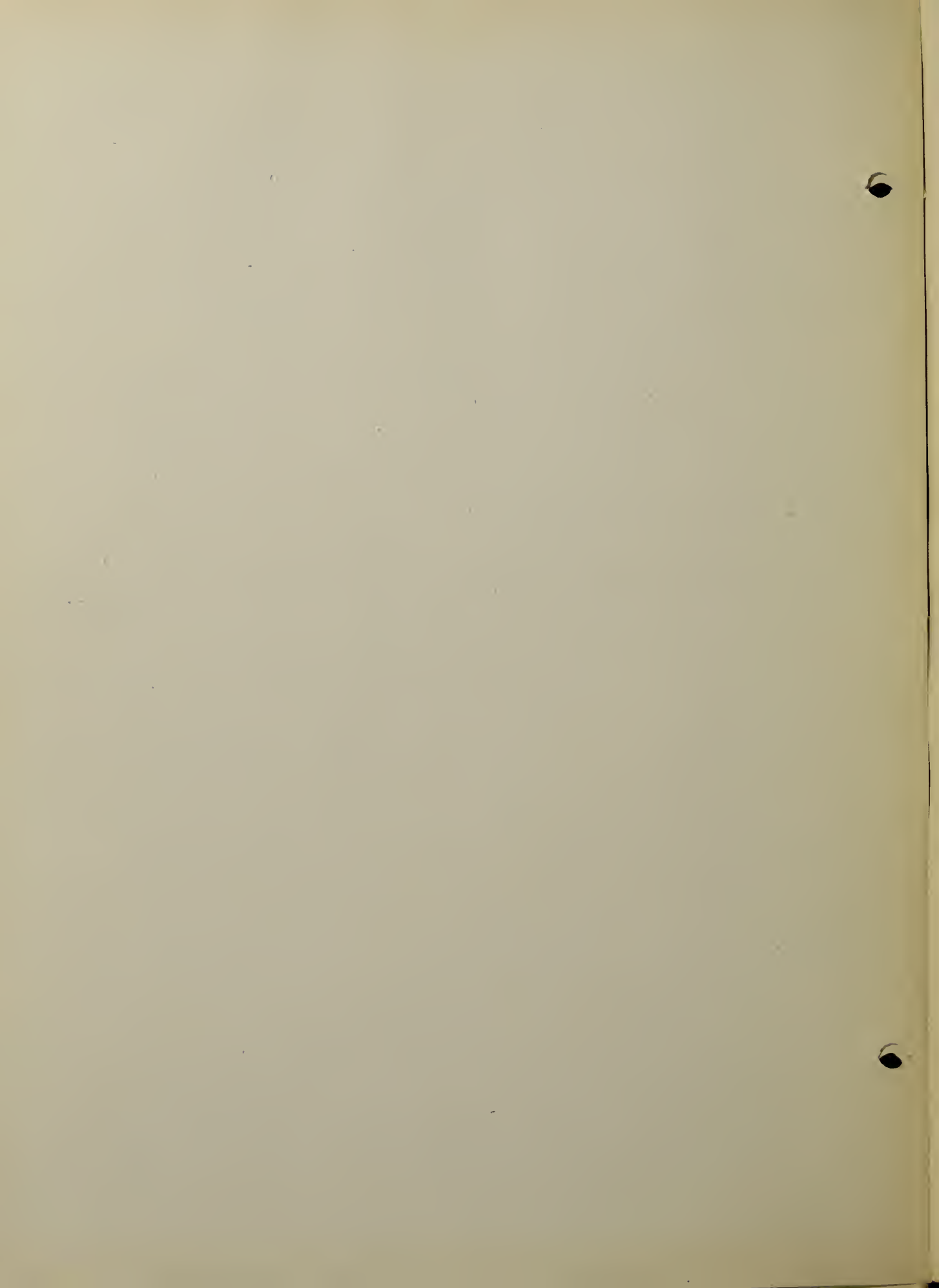
⁴
M. on Fl.
255

people, you are stifled for want of an outlet toward something beautiful, great, and noble." But these are the ones that George Eliot sees bathed in the light of glowing beauty for,¹ "Human feeling is like the mighty rivers that bless the earth: it does not wait for beauty--it flows with resistless force and brings beauty with it."

In George Eliot's time woman was beginning to emerge into the light of day. It is interesting to notice that her strongest characters are women. Maggie, Dinah, Romola, Dorothea and Gwendolen we think of first in their books, while Dolly Winthrop, Mrs. Poyser and Mrs. Cadwall^aher are the spice givers. To group them is perhaps unfair as they mirror so splendidly all womankind and the greatest are never stationary characters and so refuse to enter exact pigeon-holes. Yet we are reminded of Thackeray's brilliant Ethel Newcome's and Becky's and more slowly perceiving Amelia's when we think of Gwendolen and Maggie in contrast to Lucy Deane, Rosamund and even gentle Dorothea, although their developments are very different. For "Lucy Deane's such a good child--you may set her on a stool and there she'll sit for an hour together and never offer to get off." But as for Maggie,--she says, "I do feel for people when they are in trouble: I don't think I could ever bear to make anyone unhappy; and yet I often hate myself

¹
A. Bede
182

²
M. on Fl.
42



because I get angry sometimes at the sight of happy
 1 M. on Fl. people." Tom says of her, ¹"At one time you take
 368 pleasure in a sort of perverse self denial, and at
 another you have not resolution to resist a thing
 that you know to be wrong." Poor Maggie with her
 volcano of a soul "whose lot was beginning to have
 a still, sad monotony which threw her more than ever
 on her inward self."

Again Thackeray portrays Becky, the mother of
 little Pawdon, with so little mother instinct, but
 Gwendolen Grandcourt, Nancy Lammeter, and Romola
 are George Eliot's childless women, big with mother
 love. The motherhood instinct is the common bond
 that unites Lydia Clasher and Gwendolen when they
 seem farthest apart. George Eliot is fond of con-
 trasts in femininity,--Dinah, the unselfish, versus
 Hetty, the doll. Especially in description of out-
 ward details her women show off each other,--Nancy
 and Priscilla preparing for the ball,--Tessa and
 Romola,--Mary Garth and Rosamund. That charmingly
 old fashioned touch of womanhood, deference to elders,
 we see most beautifully portrayed by Esther to Mrs.
 Transome, by Denner to her mistress, by Romola to
 Savonarola and her father.

Her women with a sense of humor do most good
 in her books, Dorothea Brooke excepted, as is true
 in the world at large. Esther Lyon may not be able
 to defend Byron to the powerful young Felix but she

¹
Felix H. can at least silence her mentor by telling him, ¹ "You have such strong words at command that they make the smallest argument seem formidable. If I had ever met the giant Cormoran, I should have made a point of agreeing with him in his literary opinions." Mary Carth can roguishly suggest to Fred Vincy how Juliet, Ophelia, Flora MacIvor and Corinne might respond to his lovelorn melancholy. Rosamund Vincy at least knows her limitations. ² "Happily she never attempted to joke, and this perhaps was the most decisive mark of her cleverness."

³
Felix H. George Eliot's description of Mirah ³ "in whom bodily loveliness seems as properly one with the entire being," is wonderfully sympathetic. We can well imagine the author loving her own creation, she who was so quickly sensitive to music of voice and beauty of form and whose own face is generally considered homely. In what contrast to Mirah does she speak of Hetty Sorrel. ⁴ "There are faces which nature charges with a meaning and pathos not belonging to the single soul that flutters beneath them, but speaking the joys and sorrows of foregone generations." Poor Hetty and poor women of her sort! "Good come out of it!" said Adam passionately. ⁵ "That doesn't alter the evil: her ruin can't be undone. I hate that talk o' people, as if there was a way o' making amends for everything."

George Eliot makes his criticism sound a final and universal note.

Those were the days when man's intellectual superiority to woman was not so humorous a subject as today. Mr. Brooke, for example, who had no doubt on any point, delivers his decision,¹ "Well, but now, Casaubon, such deep studies, classics, mathematics, that kind of thing, are too taxing for a woman--too taxing, you know." Tom Tulliver can conscientiously force Maggie to bend to his will. Philip Wakem's father, who is liberal for his day, can say,² "We don't ask what a woman does---we ask whom she belongs to."

Esther Lyon herself holds that "a real fine lady does not wear clothes that flare in people's eyes, or use importunate scents, or make a noise as she moves: she is something refined and graceful and never obtrusive." It is a pity our modern ladies do not observe this beautiful conception more. Harold Transome, benighted

³
Felix H. being, observes, "It does not signify what women think---⁴
they are not called upon to act." Under such mastery

⁴
Felix H. his mother had indeed learned, "half the sorrows of women would be averted if they could repress the speech they know to be useless--nay, the speech they have resolved not to utter." She was most unhappy because she was keen and conscious that she was given cushions and carriages and recommended to enjoy herself, and then

⁵
Felix H. expected to be "contented under contempt and neglect."
117

¹
F. Holt
128

¹ "That's what makes women a curse; all life is stunted to suit their littleness," said Felix. And here is

²
F. Holt
114

² the author's true comment, "It is a fact kept a little too much in the back ground that mothers have a self larger than their maternity." Were George Eliot

³
F. Holt
327

³ alive today how vital an interest would she take in suffrage and feminism! "In this way poor women whose power lies solely in their influence make themselves like music out of tune, and only move men to run away!"

⁴
F. Holt
355

But with her forward step she does not leave behind the best of the old ideals. She knows ⁴ "the best part of a woman's love is worship" but she would hardly

⁵
F. Holt
383

accept that ⁵ "a woman ought not to have any trouble. There should always be a man to guard her from it."

⁶
Rom.
355

A woman is an individual. Her soul develops; she is capable of sacrifice and renunciation. Romola is never more queenly than when she says, ⁶ "If everything else is doubtful, the suffering that I can help is certain; if the glory of the cross is an illusion, the sorrow is only the truer."

George Eliot strikes a positive note whenever she expresses her social consciousness. The despair of tearing down is not in her pages so much as the remedy for renewed life. Soul salvation, happiness and redemption, all through service she reiterates. We hear much today of the cleansing power of work and the nobility of labor, perhaps we hear more of it than

we see in action. But Caleb Garth was strong in both belief and doing and through work he wrought Fred Vincy's redemption. He counsels the young man,¹ "No matter what a person is"--here his mouth looked bitter and he snapped his fingers--"whether he was the prime minister or the rickthatcher, if he didn't do well what he undertook to do."² "It's a fine thing to have a chance of putting men into the right way with their farming, and getting a bit of good contriving and solid building done--that those who are living and those who come after will be the better for it."³ "A bad workman of any sort makes his fellows distrusted." The influence of work is more far reaching than the influence of words. After his talk with Dorothea, again Caleb says, "She said a thing I often used to think myself when a lad: 'Mr. Garth, I should like to feel if I lived to be old, that I had improved a great piece of land and built a great many good cottages, because the work is of a healthy kind while it is being done.'"

Adam Bede is sterling largely because of his clean love of work well done.⁴ "A good solid bit

o' work lasts. Therefore if it's only laying a floor down, somebody's the better for it being done

well besides the man as does it."⁵ "It's all I've got to think of now--to do my work well, to make the world a bit better place for them as can enjoy it."

¹
Midd.
497

²
Midd.
359

³
Midd.
361

⁴
A. Bede
490

⁵
A. Bede
477

Adam had no theories about setting the world to rights,¹ "but he saw there was a great deal of damage done by building with illseasoned timber." It is the bed rock of his religion.² "God helps us with our headpieces and our hands as well as with our souls." But Mr. Bulstrode with his friend³ "never conceived that trade had anything to do with the scheme of salvation." Still, like everyone else of that sort⁴ "he wanted to get the agent who was more anxious for his employer's interests than for his own." Bulstrode in trouble knows no solace.

With Adam Bede in times of sorrow, work is by habit his balm.⁵ "There's nothing but what's bearable as long as a man can work," he says. When most the hand is busy then most the heart's at rest. Mrs. Transome's worsted work alone makes life livable in some of her reminiscent moments. Embroidery had been a constant element in her life,⁶ "that soothing occupation of taking stitches to produce what neither she nor anyone else wanted was then the resource of many a well-born and unhappy woman."

Dinah Morris's power over the villagers comes in part from the clean comradeship of work.⁷ "I am poor, like you," says she. "I have to get my living with my hands." In times of speed and tension of ambition that carries us beyond our own tried skill, the intensive power of keeping at one's present,

¹
A. Bede
167

²
A. Bede
10

³
Midd.
546

⁴
Midd.
610

⁵
A. Bede
118

⁶
F. Holt
95

⁷
A. Bede
32

perhaps disagreeable, job is the best cure for dissipating energies in new and unprofitable fields. Felix Holt kept this creed as his sacred stimulus.

¹
F. Holt
434

¹ "If there's anything our people want convincing of, it is that there's some dignity and happiness for a man other than changing his station."

Tom Tulliver can respond to this chord when his Uncle Deane tells him, "I made my master's interest my own." Tom develops through this the few qualities we can admire in him.

²
Silas M.
18

But for work unaided by higher forces as a pure redemptive power, Silas Marner gives the strongest proof, when he weaves² "like the spider, from pure impulse. Every man's work pursued steadily becomes an end in itself." His redemption is fulfilled through Eppie, but we feel it begins in his work, that he would not have been so open to those finer regenerations had not the clean power to do his daily task first prepared him.

Redemption through work is a cure from outside oneself. Redemption through human relations is also a vigorous purge to one's own diseased soul. Just as Aristotle says the theatre, the tragedy, rouses us from our own abnormal subjectivity into an objective state, and so makes more normal our own emotions when we turn back to them, any outside force helps a diseased mind by taking it away from soul

racking introspection. Thus relations with our fellows are redemptive not from the sympathy they offer so much as from the constructive drawing away from self they afford. In the old time revival when the converted could once voice his repentance, the saving came to him, for it was then he got beyond self into communion with his fellows. So with Silas Marner, though no person may have heard him he found that ¹"the cry had relieved him from the first maddening pressure of truth," for it was the symbol of entrance again into human relations. Tito's great void is when ²"a real hunger for Tessa's innocent lovingness" falls upon him. Maggie and Tom, fighting each other in spirit, were able to forget ³"everything else in the sense that they had one father and one sorrow." Dorothea's life is always beautiful and hallowed because of the halo of human relations she carries with her. ⁴"It is not a sin to make yourself poor in performing experiments for the good of all," says this ⁵"later born St. Theresa." ⁶"I think we deserve to be beaten out of our beautiful houses with a scourge of small cords--all of us who let tenants live in such sties as we see around us." ⁷"Enamoured of intensity and greatness" and so remembering her neighbors, she tells her uncle, ⁸"I used to come from the village with all that dirt and coarse ugliness like a pain within me,

¹
S. Marner
45

²
Rom.
300

³
M. on Fl.
194

⁴
Midd.
16

⁵
Midd.
Intro.
⁶
Midd.
29

⁷
Midd.
8

⁸
Midd.
347

and the simpering pictures in the drawing room seemed to me like a wicked attempt to find delight in what is false while we don't mind how hard the truth is for the neighbors outside our walls."

Redemption begins not be absorbing from others but by giving out to them. ¹"The raw bacon which clumsy Molly spares from her own scanty store that she may carry it to her neighbor's child to stop the fits, may be a piteously inefficacious remedy; but the stirring of neighborly kindness that prompted the deed has a beneficent radiation that is not lost."

The so called cruelty of childhood which comes from the inability of the child to share our grief, makes the child the best comforter in time of trouble. He compels us in his innocent selfishness to give out to him, which relieves our tension. So with Silas, ²--"There was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and love between the child and the world." Mrs. Holt, poor woman, was tenderly careful of the helplessness of the orphan child. It held her close to Felix when his clear vision was her dense fog, for ³"like many women who appear to others to have a masculine decisiveness of tone, and to themselves to have a masculine force of mind, and who come into severe collision with sons arrived at the masterful stage, she had the maternal cord vibrating

¹
A. Bede
39

²
Silas M.
137

³
B. Holt
415

strongly within her toward all tiny children." Mr. Tulliver, rankling and apoplectic with his ignorant prejudices, is never more dear to us not more noble than when his sympathy toward abused and misunder-

¹ M. on Fl. stood Maggie, pours out in--¹"Come, come, my wench,"
66 putting his arm round her, "never mind; you was i' the right to cut it (her hair) off if it plagued you; give over crying; father'll take your part." If this protection and love toward childhood be the springs of chivalry, long let chivalry endure!

Breadth of interest takes us without ourselves and is therefore redemptive. This includes work,
² human relations and even more, ²"That serenity and elevation of mind which is infallibly brought by a preoccupation with the wider relation of things."

We cannot help remembering the exceptions that prove this rule, the sweet narrowness of Milly Barton's
³ A. Barton sphere, whose ³"world lies in the four walls of her home and it is only through her husband that she is in any electric communication with the world beyond." How in contrast is the vigorous helpfulness of Daniel Deronda, who redeems Gwendolen by ⁴"the wakening of a new interest--this passing from the supposition that we hold the right opinions on a subject we are careless about, to a sudden care for it, and a sense that our opinions were ignorance--which is an effectual remedy for ennui."

⁴ D. D.
363

² Felix H.
172

Sorrow itself, when it arouses us to look beyond our own small lot is the greatest redeeming force. Romola has this vision when she tells Tito, after discovering the full measure of his perfidies,

¹
Rom.
412
²
Felix H.
80

¹"We shall always be divided unless misery should come and join us." Rufus Lyon knows ²"There is a sort of subjection which is the peculiar heritage of largeness and love; and strength is often only another name for willing bondage to irremediable weakness." So Denner when her mistress was ³"thinking of what might be brought not by death, but by life" is made saintly by her power to feel the misery of others. She tells too how she used to be sorry for the poor French Queen when she was young and would have lain cold for her to lie warm. Does Tolstoi express more in his "Master and Man?" Through misery of his great sin Arthur Donnithorne is redeemed and made pure. He tells Adam, ⁴"If you had done anything you had bitterly . to repent of, you'd be more generous."

⁴
A. Bede
474

But George Eliot does not make the wiping away of sin a quick patent cleaning process. It is easy when the sun is shining to think "all's well with the world." ⁵"It is as hard to a boy or girl to believe that a great wretchedness will actually befall them as to believe that they will die." So the author's optimism gains point by the recognition that some deeds are irremediable. ⁶"Adam was forcing Arthur to feel more intensely the irrevocableness of his own wrong doing."

⁵
A. Bede
370

⁶
A. Bede
473

- 1
A. Bede 428
2
A. Bede 464
3
A. Bede 544
- 1 "That's what makes the blackness of it--it can never be undone," groans Adam. 2 "Good come out of it! That doesn't alter the evil: her ruin can't be undone." Arthur agrees with Adam that 3 "there's a sort of wrong that can never be made up for."

To return to the great questions of today, what light, then, has George Eliot thrown on them? Were she alive to what side would she lend her splendid influence? Would she go so far as to be an ally of the radical? Through Felix Holt she says, 4 "I reverence the law but not where it is a pretext for wrong, which it should be the very object of law to hinder.---I hold it blasphemy to say that a man ought not to fight against authority: there is no religion and no freedom that has not done it in the beginning." But she recognizes too, that no struggle is a new one. We 5 still have the old "mixture of pushing forward and being pushed forward which is a brief history of most human beings." Yet she has faith in future generations.

6 "But very close and diligent looking at living creatures even through the best microscopes will leave room for new and contradictory discoveries." We 7 wonder with her whether "one learns oftener to love real objects through their representations or the representations through the real objects," but at least we feel that studying through her eyes makes

4
F. Holt 441

5
F. Holt 319

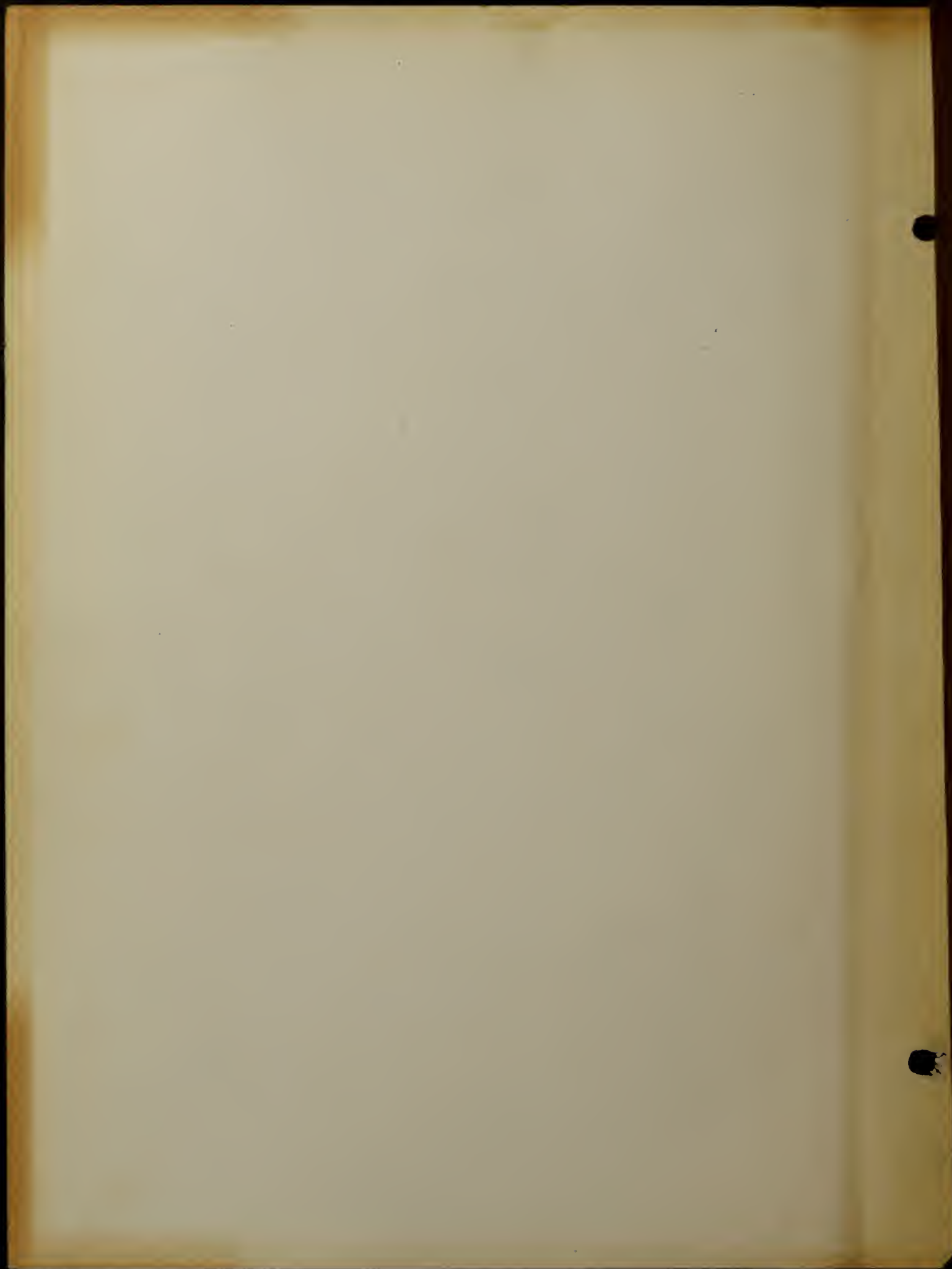
6
F. Holt 231

7
D. D. 424

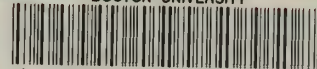
clearer our observations of present problems, for she through books like Savonarola with his thunderous voice has that secret of oratory which¹ "lies not in saying new things but in saying things with a certain power that moves the speaker" and so the hearer.

¹

Rom.
168



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